



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Human Services
400 Deaderick Street
Nashville, TN 37219-1602

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Michelle Mowery Johnson
Director of Communications
615.313-4707/office

THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES SAYS “ADIOS” TO HISPANIC CULTURAL GAP

Training for DHS Workers Covers Several Mid-State Counties

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – For many families, it’s not easy going to the Department of Human Services and asking for assistance. Imagine how much more difficult it is if you don’t even speak English.

The Tennessee Department of Human Services is working with a local Latino non-profit group, Conexion Americas, to better serve the growing Hispanic community.

Several hundred DHS employees in Middle Tennessee will soon undergo the organization’s Latino Cultural Competency Training. The training is designed to make caseworkers feel more comfortable dealing with non-English speaking clients, and vice versa.

“The point of this program is to make the interaction between DHS and the Hispanic community mutually beneficial,” says DHS Deputy Commissioner Ed Lake. “We are looking forward to working with Conexion Americas and improving our relationship with this growing segment of our community.”

Renata Soto, with Conexion Americas adds, “We believe this training will make those in the Hispanic community feel more welcome, because DHS employees will feel more comfortable in their interaction with their Latino customers; DHS employees will be able to better guide these clients to needed services.”

Conexion Americas will perform role playing scenarios with DHS staff members by going through an appointment process. The group will also interview caseworkers on the challenges they face and their attitudes toward Hispanic clients and culture.

The training program began in Davidson County on April 16, and will continue in Bedford, Marshall, Lincoln, Coffee, Franklin, Warren, Putnam and DeKalb Counties. More than 3,500 Hispanic families in Middle Tennessee turn to DHS for assistance every month.

####